Vol. II No. 18 February 20, 1950
The Weekly That Koeps You Informed of the Current Broadway Critical Scope

N. Y. Openings This Week

The Devil's Disciple--Royale, 2/21/50. Addrich and Myers and Julius Fleischman present the Margaret Webster production of Shew's "American play" after its successful revival at the City Center, Maurice Evans, Marsha Hunt, Victor Jory and Dennis King are featured in the comedy,

The Bird Cage--Coronet, 2/22/50. Melvyn Douglas stars in the new arthur Laurents play directed by New Republic critic Harold Cluman. Produced by Walter Fried and Lars Nordenson, the cast features Etcanor Lynn, Sanford Meisner and Laurence Hugo.

Quick Glance at New N.Y. Shows -- digosts on inside pages

Come Back, Little Sheba--Booth, 2/15/50, William Inge's new play drew mixed reviews from his N.Y. colloagues. The former St. Louis drama critic's second play was preised by critics of Times, Compass, World Telegram and Sun, Journal American, Brooklyn Eagle and Newark News. Several others filed "so-se" notices, though all added Shirley Booth and Sidney Blackmer to the list of top performers of the season.

Show Roopens

All You Need Is One Good Break--Mansfield, 2/9/50-2/11/50, reopened 2/20/50. Arnold Manoff play which was panned by all of the daily critics will resume its Broadway run on Monday, February 20, after being closed for a week. The producers, Kipness and Proser, have cut down on some of the revolving sets and the number of stago hands required.

Shows that Closed

Dance Me A Song--Royale, 1/20/50-2/18/50. Dwight Wiman's revue, which introduced Welly Cox to the comedy scene, opened to widely divergent notices. Some critics thought the show equalled the best of the Wiman "Little Shows", others couldn't find anyone but Cox to rave about.

Magazine Reviewers Look at the New Plays -- digests on inside pages

Mr. Barry's Etchings-48th Street Theatre, 1/31/50. Comedy starring Lee Tracy continues to draw a row of "con" notices. Added to the solid list against the new play are critics of Variety, Billboard, New Yorker, Newsweek and Cue.

The Innocents--Playhouse, 2/1/50. William Archibald's dramatization of Henry James' "Turn of the Screw" has succeeded in scaring good reviews out of several more of the critics. But Gibbs, New Yorker, and Marshall, Nation, fail to be impressed by the spooky goings on.

Arms and the Girl-46th Street Theatre, 2/2/50. Theatre Guild's musical version of "Pursuit of Happiness" won better notices from the weekly critics than it did from the daily critics. Variety's critic was the sole dissenter, though some didn't give their 100 percent backing.

As You Like It -- Cort, 1/26/50. Two "pros" from Clurman, New Republic and Phelan Commonweal, were racked up by this Theatre Guild revival. Marshall, Nation, would have enjoyed the proceedings better if everything wasn't so elaborate.

The Cocktail Party-Miller, 1/2/50. Clurman, Now Republic, let out a blast at the "felicitous phoniness" involved in those who wrote, staged and praised the new Filot play. Fraising the production, but condemning its thought, Clurman leaves no cuertien where he stands in the current controversy.

Milton Berle is threatening to sue William Hawkins, N.Y. World Telegram and Sun, for quoting him as saying the title of the Joc Kipness show should have been "All You Need Is One Good Act" reports Dorothy Kilgallon, N.Y. Journal American.

Come Back, Little Sheba

- a. Times --Pro-- Candid production, splendid performances of straightforward unhackneyed and terrifyingly true play. Booth superb, Blackmoor plays second act like thunderbolt, small parts played neatly. Though first act is bare.-atkinson.
- b. Herald Tribune --Con-- Offering has neither momentum, nor honest feeling. Sturdy acting is squandered on dramatic trivialities. To the credit of Blackmer and Booth that they create full length portraits in ungainly situations.-Barnes.
- c. News --So-So-- Uncertain if play was mixed up, if I was mixed up, or if we both were. Park Chekhov, part Arthur Miller, part of the divine gospel of Alcoholics Anonymous. Another title might be Death of a Poodle. Splendidly played by two leads Booth Theatre is hereby renamed for Shirley Booth. This is work of great promise, which falls short of being a play.-Chapman.
- d. Mirror -- Con-- Underwritten drama, synopsis for good play. Blackmer gives his best performance, as does Booth. Has some electric and exciting moments, but not sufficient. -- Coleman.
- c. Compass -- Pro-- Guild has done few plays so kindly and compassionately. Writing, acting, direction, production all done with modest honesty. A fine little play by a man who hates tripe. A moving, true, warm play which will leave a gap in the lives of those who are corcless enough not to see it. Pollock.
- f. Post --So-So-Slendor, unfulfilled play with too much honesty and insight to be readily dismissed. Lecks the sense of completeness of satisfying drama, but deserves respect for its understanding treatment. Blackmer and Booth are brilliant direction and setting and acting in lessor roles add to the credibility; seems outline of play rather than the finished work. Watts.
- g. World Tologram and Sun -- Pro-- Sensitive, disciplined direction and remarkable acting give events onstage a real impact. Rarely honest piece of theatre writing. It is exciting only when it chooses to be, but it is always enticing. -Hawkins.
- h. Journal American -- Pro-- Play is notable, provides Booth and Blackmor with vehicle in which to ride their talents. Teamwork of two leads in second act seems is best acting seen hereabouts in many an hour of playgoing. -Garland.
- i. Brooklyn Engle --Pro-- absorbing fare for serious minded playgoors, especially those who enjoy superlative acting. There is breath of life in play that some more experienced playwrights have never been able to capture. Booth and Blackmer performances among the finest of season.-Sheaffer.
- j. Newark News --Pro-- Meaningful little stage work of character analysis, written wisely and well. Booth gives finest performance of her entire career. Blackmer provides brilliant stage pertrait. Rest of cast good, fine direction.-Field.
- k. Women's Wear Daily -- Con-- If play as good as its character studies, it would be major contribution of the season. But its narrative too fragile and its philosophy too banal to offer a gratifying session in the theatre.- Dash.

Author Turned Critic Defines St. Louis Cultural Front

William Irgo, author of Come Back. Little Sheba, is a reformed drama critic turned playwright. Critic for the St. Louis Star Times during the war, he told Vernon Rice, N.Y.Fost, that he covered the cultural front which included drama, music, films, art, ice shows and relier derbies.

Morgan Turns Critic's Critic

Theatre Guild, producers of <u>Come Back</u>, <u>Little Sheba</u>, took NBC comedian Henry Morgan seriously when he said he wanted to be a drama critic. They sent him passes to the opening night of their fourth show of the season. Morgan, who admitted it may be the first and last time NBC will allow him, criticized the ideas and structure of selected sentences from the deily reviewer's criticism of the William Inge play. To Watts, Ney-Post, Morgan awarded the "I Guess We Were In The Same Theatre At That, Doc" Iward for coming closest in his criticism to the play Morgan attended, Barnes, Herald Tribune, received the "What Theatre Did You Go Tom Doc" Award for the opposite reason.

The Innocents "Pro Reviews"

- s. Women's Wear Daily-Gripping, powerful play that casts hypnotic spell over theatre goers. Brilliantly performed, direction catches the suspensive quality of tale. Ghost story with deep psychological meaning.-Dash.
- c. Wall Street Journal -- Mood of terror of Jomes tale recaptured in handsome fashion. Atmosphere so well established that I found honest to goodness chill settled upon my spine. Cooke.
- c. Billboard-Mervelously east, played and directed. Play reelly belongs to the two youngsters. Play's end doesn't live up to promising beginning. Sharp seenes and good writing, but implications indicate horrors to come that are never quite fulfilled. But as a brilliently acted costume thriller, atmosphere is enough to bid for undivided attention.-Francis.
- g. Commonweal--Astonishingly good theatre piece. Superb direction, fine music. acting all equally fine. World and terrifying experience in theatre.Pholan.
- i. Newsweek--Eerie atmosphere and clammy weight of accumulative terror have been established and maintained in highly effective dramatic terms.
- k. Cue--Fine blend of ancient willies and amazing good performances. Play grouns with original intangibles and awful inforences. Extraordinary piece.

- b. Journal of Commerce--Stunning montage containing four greatly talented people and two mirages. Mood piece presented with exquisite taste and delicate inference. Should lift theatrical season out of deldrums, and you out of your seate-
- d. Morning Telegraph -- One of the most distinguished productions of our season. It has shape, taste, power and is excellently played. You will not forget the experience for a long time. -Bolton.
- f. Variety--Spookiest play of season and the most mystifying mystery in memory. Final curtain leaves practically every question unanswered. Presentation is worthy of more rewording material. Glon-ville's staging emphasizes mood in the absence of much movement in the script--
- h. Daily Worker--Slickly done ghost story capably acted and efficiently directed. Can't find any excuse though to waste all this time and money on a silly ghost story though my companion says it was very spooky,-Rubin.
- j. Timo--Drematizes famous ghost story with considerable tact and fidelity. Script captures Jamesian elegance and ecriness. Best scenes with the children.
- 1. George Jean Nathan--Except for the visible ghosts which are unnecessary, the adaptation is admirably staged, earily set, and uncannily acted by youngsters.

"Con Reviews"

m. Now Yorker--Resemblance with original not very prenounced. Horror content nover seemed capecially high. A sad disappointment, and a minor secrilogo. Fibbs.

n. Nation--Ghost story has been misread. Get only distorted glimpses of realities beneath, main point of story is blurred and the exquisite minor points fall by the way.-Marchall.

Watts Picks Person Choices of the Season

Richard Watts, Jr., Post, set down a long list of personal choices of the season. They included Best new American play-The Member of the Wedding. Best new foreign play-The Cocktail Party. Happiest Theatrical Evening-Caesar and Cleopatra. Gayest production-As You Like It. Best Musical Comedy-Texas Li'l Darlin'. Play that doserves more appreciation than it is receiving-The Enchanted. Most difficult critical assignment-Trying to decide which child actor is giving the finest performance.

Arms and the Girl

- a. New Yorker--Pro--Not in class with stylish competitors like South Pacific, Kiss Mc, Kate, but it is still a decorative and spirited operation. Heartily recommend it to all those who ask for no more than simply entertainment from the musical stage.-Gibbs.
- b. Newswock--So-So-A lot of book, but not much humor that isn't contributed directly by the players. Score is only intermittently captivating, but is always interesting. Enthusiastic example of old fashioned operate spruced up for modern consumption. Succeeds thanks largely to some heroic rescue work on the part of its costars and their featured supporters.
- c. Time--So-So--Producers can thank its stars they are its stars; they have the charm and personality to make it a good deal better evening than it is a show. Nothing very awful, but nothing particularly good. Prime delight is Bailey.
- d. Cue--Pro--Most of it is sure fire fun, but does get to dragging protty heavily at times. Elaborate and often ingratiating show. Could be considerably funnior if it were faster. Even so it makes for fresh holiday and herse play.-Gabrial.
- o. Varioty--Con--Mechanical and only moderately entertaining show. Story is reasonably amusing, but there is too much of it. Songs and dances lack the electrifying moments that a click musical should have. Score lacks simple enough melodies; dances seem repetitious and without clear meaning. Performances are generally the most redocming element of the show.-Hobe.
- f. Billboard--Pro--Lagged intervals and repetitious meterial which slow down a gast running musical, lyrics are occasionally pedestrian, and tunes not particularly exciting. But over all show is saved by the splendid teamwork of its principals. Steeds up to a highly enjoyable evening.-Francis.
- g. Women's Wear Daily--Pro--Comes closer to being a romantic operatta of the Colonial era, than a traditional musical comedy. Melodic score, excellent dances. Pleasantly beguiling and disaming show. Fabray and Guetary cut fine figures. Spicy show of considerable merriment.-Dash.
- h. Journal of Commorce--Pro--Sumptuous musical, handsome company gives expert performance of handsome production. Cast londs considerable talent. Should be received enthusiastically.-Colby.
- in Christian Science Monitor--Pro--Fetching frolic graced with the talents of three of the most engaging entertainers in town. Fabray deserves the star billing given her for the first time, Guetary makes auspicious debut, Bailey is amusing, but her acting lacks the relaxation of her singing.

Clurman "Rosts" Betwoon Plays

Two days lapsed octwoon the directorial chores of New Republic critic Harold Clurman who is responsible for the staging of The Member of the Wodding and Bird Cage Clurman spent the two days at Bill Brown's health camp where he kept the windows closed, ate in his room and wrote two articles, he told Frank Farrell, N.Y.World Telegram and Sun.

"Mr. Barry's Etchings" "Con Reviews"

a. Variety--Play is as counterfeit as the money-making joke it is based on, has too many phoney promises. Pace is pedestrian, writing undistinguished. Tracy adds more to play than it rates.

c. New Yorker--Compendium of all jokes based on counterfeiting since the end of the barter system. Most of them are dreadful. Rare acting telents of Tracy and Cummings make parts of it appear to be a comedy. Both are in tough spot and my heart goes out to them.-Gibbs.

- c. Cue--Looked like one of those scripts which was better off before somebody begon chopping it up and changing it around.-Gabriel.
- g. Christian Science Monitor-Writers have not embellished their basic idea with enough business to sustain three acts. Tracy turns in genial performance.

b. Billboard--Authors conceived a first rate farce, but given birth to a cluttered up comedy. Could and should be a lot of fun. Play not worthy of Tracy's talents--Francis.

- d. George Jean Nathan—Seem to have seem this play before with a different title. Twist in plot makes audience feel they are seeing three different plays at once, all pretty dismal.
- f. Newswook--Random incidents are much too flimsy to support Tracy, and too hoavy-handed to be supported by him. Wasted with him in an agreeable cast is Cummings Might be good idea to team them again in story that might strike off a few sparks.

h. Wall Street Journal-Good idea, popular star, experienced producer end up in a disappointment. Cast, except for Tracy works with more good will than effort.

The Clutterbuck

i. Theatre--So-So--Jerry-built script by journeyman playwright, never scintillating, and not dull. Lacking in belly laughs, it abounds in chuckles. Margetson is immensely funny, Helmore is emiable, Carleton is engaging.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

j. Theatre Arts--Pro--Rowdy panegyric to the days when blendes panned gold with their cyclashes. Channing gives one of the most delightful performances ever seen in a musical comody. Fast moving, handsome, well played, and very well staged. All of which holps overcome a somewhat anemic plot.

The Man

k. Daily Worker--Con--Another of these how-long-will-it-take-before-haskills-her affair. Acting and directing as good as can be expected in familiar business which could have been compressed into a one actor and then tossed into the wastepaper basket.-Rubin.

London Critic Refused to Rush Play Review

Anthony Cookman, drama critic of the London Times, refused to file his review for The Cocktail Party after its Edinburgh premiere. He didn't feel the quality of the play was high enough to justify a first night review.

Kilgollen Questions Happy Time Casting

Exactly Kilgallan, N.Y.Journel American, thinks it is too much to ask the playgeorge to believe that luscious Eva Gabor can play the part of a maid in The Happy Time. She doubts many wives would like such blendes around the kitchen.

Ward Morehouse Reviews the Current Plays

- a. All You Need Is One Good Break---Con--Monstrous piece of writing. Imitative and laborious playmaking with bogus clements of Odets, Rice, Miller and Kober. Has some amusing touching and truthful scenes. Lee Grant does beautifully in small part, but the play is awful.
- b. Come Back, Little Sheba--Con--Meager, sketchy and loosely written play containing some terrible truths and offering some fine performances. Written honestly but unevenly, not enough material for a full length drams. Lacks tautness, it could use better writing. For all its infirmities it's a play worth doing. Inge is a dramatist to be respected.

The Cockteil Party

c. New Republic -- Con--Reflects glamor without glory on its author, neither a difficult nor an esotoric play. Makes Eliot's message medish. It is a masterpiece of the felicitously phony, a successful experiment in form for use on the contemporary stage. Production is admirably intelligent. But I can't help seeing the play as nothing less than a poisonously hypocritical emollient which the pseeds serious will lap up like a God-given nestrum.-Clurman.

As You Like It

- d. Commonweal--Pro--If you feel you can metch your own conception of Rosalind with Hepburn's known style, I think you are going to have a very good time with this version. List it as breathless holiday stuff for all kids and cousins, and a fair escape for the rest of the week day world.-Phelan.
- o. New Republic -- Pro-- Production is traditional and conventional without being musty, reminded me of the quality of the Sadler Wells ballet. Hopburn plays as a devoted member of an endearing company, not as a star. Clurman.
- f. Nation--So-So--Conceived and directed in the spirit it calls for, delicately fresh and vitel spirit. But looks like director had to content himself with a slightly pempous american patron who has given him more than he needed for the production. Everything is too claborate. Most of the time Hopburn is tense, and modern, a self-conscious, rather spoiled young woman. Rest of cast excellent, and director's basic handling is right. See it.-Marshall.

The Enchanted

- go Commonweal--Pro--Very good job, awfully glad to be able to be contemporary rather than nostalgic about Kaufman at long last. Credit him with fine direction and inspired casting. Cast seems to be having a fine time, and they certainly gave me one.

 Pholan.
- h. Now Republic--Con--Contains more genuine poetry than "The Cockteil Party", but the production lacks lightness, fancy or frankness. Except for the score, it is an almost complete miss.-Clurman.
- i. Nation--Con--It did not enchant me. Indeed it struck me as Fronch sontimentality at its worst. Which is harder to bear then American sentimentality at its worst.-Warshell.
- j. Christian Science Monitor--Pro--Sportive, playful, enchantingly wise and wisely enchanting. Adeptation is in the best view of sophisticated Giradoux fairy tale. Something to captivate the heart and delight the imagination. Staging caught a good deal of the magic, but not all of it.-Beaufort.

The Happy Time

- a. Commonweal--Pro-A happy comedy that works out into a good number of laughs, some tears and astonishingly enough into plain, common, democratic sense, well and clearly stated. Excellent cast with Dauphin gaining the honors and Dana, Kaszaner and Stewart close on his heels.-Pholen.
- b. The Nation-Con-French Canadian sentimentality seems even more revolting then either American or French. Producers have seen fit to sponsor and support a play that is not only sentimental, but vulgar and pretentious.-Marshall.
- c. Saturday Review of Literature--Pro--Over deliberate, but very pleasant, madcap. Scenes blessed with such tenderness and gaiety that one resents the evening's
 descent into slapstick. Acting ranges from utter honesty and delicacy to hollow
 clowning.-Brown.
- d. George Jean Nathan-Pro-Protty good show but not a good play. Entertainment consists largely of character vaudeville imposed upon the rough skeleton of a play. Pass the buck on the reader to decide if it is important that the theatre have good plays as well as good shows.

Koy to N.Y.C. Criticism At A Glance

Reviewers are rated as to how they like the show, not if they think it will be a hit. "Fro" means the reviewers recommend the show for an entertaining or stimulating evening. "Con" means he doesn't recommend it as such. "So-So" means the reviewer did not state his preference directly.

1.	NY Times		11. Newark News	21.	Catholic World
2.	NY Horald Tribuno		12. Women's Wear Daily	22.	Commonwoal
3.	NY News	-	13. Daily Worker	23.	Cue
4.	NY Mirror		14. Wall Stroct Journal	24.	Ch. Sci. Monit or
5.	NY Compass (Star, PM)		15. Journal of Commerce	25.	Sat . Roviow Lit.
6.	NY Post		16. Goorge Jean Nathan	26.	Nowswock
7.	NY Sun (Morchouse)		17. Morning Tolograph	270.	Time
8.	NY Journal American		18. Variety	28.	Nation
9.	NY World Tologram and Sun	:	19. Billboard	29.	New Ropublic
10.	Brooklyn Eaglo		20. Theatre Arts	30.	New Yorker

N. Y.C. Criticism At A Glance -- see key above

Alive and Ricking-Winter Garden, 1/17/50. Pro: 5-8-9-17. Con: 1-2-3-4-6-7-10-11-12-16-18-19-23-26-27-30. So-So: 14.

All You Need Is One Good Break-Mansfield, 2/9/50-2/11/50. Reopened 2/20/50. Gen: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12.

Arms and the Girl -46th St. Theatre, 2/2/50. Pro: 3-4-5-10-11-12-14-19-23-24-30. Con: 1-6-7-8-18. 60-80: 2-6-9-26-27.

As You Idko It-Cort, 1/26/50. Pro: 3-4-6-9-10-11-12-17-18-19-22-26-29. Con: 1-2-23-24-27-30.1-50-50: 5-8-14-28.

Cacsar and Cloopatra-National, 12/21/49. Pro: 1-2-3-4-6-7-10-11-12-14-15-16-17-18-19-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30. Con: 5-8-13. So-So: 9:

Cluttorbuck-Biltmoro, 12/3/49. Pro: 3-5-6-7-8-12-15-17-19-20-23-27-30. Con: 1-9-13-15-18-22-24-26-28-29. So-So: 2-4-10-14.

N.Y.C. Criticism at a Glanco-continued from proceeding page

The Cocktail Party-Miller, 1/2/50. Pro: 2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-15-18-19-23-24-26-27-28. Con: 1-9-14-22-25-29. So-So: 30.

Come Back, Little Shoba-Booth, 2/15/50. Pro: 1-5-8-9-10-11. Con: 2-4-7-12. So-So: 3-6.

Detective Story-Hudson, 3/23/49. Pro: 1-2-3-4-6-7-8-9-12-14-15-17-18-19-20-22-23-26-27-30.

The Enchanted-Lyceum, 1/18/50. Pro: 4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-16-19-22-24-27. Con: 1-2-17-18-23-26-28-29-30. So-So: 3-14.

Gentlemen Profer Blondes-Ziegfeld, 12/8/49. Pros 1-2-3-4-5-7-8-9-10-11-12-14-15-17-18-20-24-26-29-30. Cons 6-28. So-Sos 16-19-22-23-27.

The Happy Time-Plymouth, 1/24/50. Pro: 1-2-3-4-8-9-10-11-12-14-16-17-18-19-22-23-24-25: Con: 5-6-7-26-27-28-30.

I know My Love-Shubert, 11/1/49. Pro: 2-3-4-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-14-15-17-18-19-23-24-25-26-28. Con: 1-5-16-20-22-27-29-30,

The Innocents-Playhouse, 2/1/50. Pro: 1-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-22-23-26-27. Con: 2-4-28-30.

Kiss Mc, Kato-Contury, 12/31/48. Pro: 28 votes. Con: New Republic.

Lost In The Stars-Music Box, 10/30/49. Pro: 1-2-3-5-6-7-10-11-12-14-15-17-18-19 23-26. Con: 8-9-13-21-22-24-25-28-29-30. So-So: 4-27.

The Man-Fulton; 1/19/50. Pro: 2-4-8-10-11-14-15423-26. Con: 1-3-5-6-9-12613--16-19-22-27-30. So-So: 17-18.

The Member of the Wedding-Empire, 1/5/50. Pro: 1-3-4-5-6-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-17-18-19-22-23-24-25-26-28. Con: 16. So-So: 2-27-30.

Miss Liberty-Imperial, 7/15/49. Pros 4-7-8-12-17-19. Cons 1-2-18-20-22-23-25-27-29. So-Sos 3-6-21-26.

Mr. Barry's Etchings-48th St. Theatre, 1/31/50. Con: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-10-11-12-14-16-17-18-19-23-24-26-30. So-So: 9.

Mister Roberts-Alvin, 2/13/48. Pro: 24 votes. Con: 24. So-So: 13-16-17.

The Rat Race-Barrymore, 12/22/49. Pro: 4-15. Con: 2-3-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14
16-17-19-22-23-24-27-28-29-30. So-So: 1-18-26.

South Pacific-Majestic, 4/8/49. Pro: 18 votes. So-So: 23-27.

Texas Li'l Darlin'-Hellinger, 11/25/49. Pro: 3-6-9-12-13-14-15-16-17-22-24.

Con: 1-4-7-18-19-23-29-30. So-So: 2-5-10-11-20-26-27.

Where's Charley-St. James, 10/11/48. Pros 1-2-3-5-8-9-11-14-15-17-18-20-21-23-29-30. Cons 6-7-12-13-16-19-22-24-25-26. So-so: 4-27.

Touch and Go-Broadhurst, 10/13/49. Pro: 1-3-6-9-11-12-13-15-16-17-23-24-26-27-28-30. Con: 2-4-5-7-14-18-19-20-22. So-So: 8-10-29.

